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SOME EXPERIMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE
UNEMPLOYED.

THE French Dictionary of Political Economy, published some thirty-five years ago, devotes fourteen closely printed pages to the *droit au travail*. So much space was doubtless given to the subject because the writer belonged to a generation that had seen Louis Blanc half succeed in establishing his National Workshops; because several of the constitutions of France had recognized the "right" in its most sweeping form; and because many of the French Socialists held it as one of their cardinal doctrines that the poor man's right to labor is the counterpart of the rich man's right to property, the one being baseless unless the other is recognized. But the fourteen pages of controversial writing no longer interest us. The author is beating the thrice threshed straw of "natural" rights, and what has since been said on the general subject by Leslie, or Maine, or Morley, or Huxley, destroys

the force of many of the arguments he urges as well as of those he controverts.

Yet we may not wholly dismiss the problem of the unemployed, when we refuse to consider it as a question of abstract right. To the minds of the discontented classes industrial society, as it exists at present, seems little better than an organized paradox: on the one hand, we have unexhausted natural resources and unsatisfied desires, and, on the other hand, we have the great army of the unemployed. Popular estimates place the number of the unemployed in England and Wales at upwards of six millions, and in the United States at more than one million. The charity organization societies of this country report that from forty to fifty per cent. of all applicants for assistance "need work rather than relief." * This ever present condition has had more influence than any theory in bringing about attempts to furnish work to the unemployed. "The English Poor Law is based primarily on an act for 'setting the poor to work,' and authorizing the collection of rates for that purpose." From the time of Elizabeth to the present there have continued to be frequent estimates of the aggregate loss to industry through enforced idleness, and frequent proposals for setting the poor to work. It is with certain experiments in this direction that the present paper is concerned.

"Charity work" is the ambiguous term used to designate such employment as is given, not primarily for the purpose of securing a useful product, but as a means of aiding the unemployed. In such cases, the pay is not given for the sake of the work, but the work for the sake of the pay. The offer of work, instead of proceeding from the motive of self-interest, as in ordinary industrial transactions, is the result of self-sacrifice on the part of the one

* This conclusion was reached after a study of nearly 28,000 individual cases in all parts of the country. The proportion of out-of-work cases was somewhat larger in the Eastern cities than elsewhere. See Mr. Charles D. Kellogg's Report to the National Conference of Charities and Correction, 1887.

who makes it. Since motives of self-interest have not prevented the extrusion of a large mass of potential labor from the industrial organism, it is interesting to learn what public and private benevolence has been able to do in the way of utilizing the waste product.

Experiments in the charitable provision of work for the unemployed may be roughly grouped in three classes: (I.) those of which the primary object is the temporary relief of the destitute; (II.) those of which the primary object is education,—“the training of the incompetent population of the laboring class into competency,” with a view to their final return to the labor market; and (III.) those undertakings of which the object is the permanent support, in isolated colonies or working homes, of such persons as have found it impossible to maintain a position in the competitive industries of the time.

(I.) Most of the English and American experiments in giving charity work are of the first-mentioned kind. Temporary relief being necessary, work is provided as a deterrent influence, as a test of worthiness, and as tending to preserve the self-respect and independence of the recipients. Incidentally, some useful product may be obtained. Thus in Washington, in the winter of 1877–78, there was much destitution; and relief was given in the form of work, with wages at fifty cents per day. About five thousand dollars were thus paid out, the men being employed to reduce certain streets to grade, and to fill up an abandoned canal south of the Capitol.

As already mentioned, the English Poor Law began with an attempt to give relief in the guise of work. This attempt narrowed down, long ago, to the mere imposition of taskwork in the workhouse or elsewhere. Such labor does nothing to preserve the self-respect of the recipient of relief, and is useful only as making the lot of the pauper less easy than that of his self-supporting neighbor.

From unproductive taskwork of this sort there are all gradations, up to the point where the cheapness of the pauper labor makes it available for ordinary employers. Some of the English vestries have utilized the work of those who must otherwise have been dependent to such good purpose that the element of charity was present only in appearance. Paving and other work was done as cheaply as it would have been by the regular contractors. The labor was unskilled, but it was compensatingly cheap.

In the United States, the commonest mode of giving relief in the form of work is found in the Provident Wood-yards. These are sometimes operated in connection with Friendly Inns, all relief being in the form of meals and lodgings given in return for work. In other places small daily wages are paid. A provident wood-yard was established in Boston in 1876, through the influence of Mr. George Abbot Ames. This institution co-operated with the Boston Provident Association, and afforded an admirable work-test. For many years it was more than self-supporting; but, after change of management and location, it became involved, and has since suspended. At the wood-yard operated by the Boston Overseers of the Poor, wages are paid either in meals and lodgings or in relief given by the overseers. The lodging-house was started to relieve the police stations of their nightly swarm of lodgers; and the work-test is valuable to the overseers in distributing outdoor relief. At times the workers are so numerous that they cannot all be profitably employed, and some are kept busy cording up wood which others are set to pull down. The sale of wood pays about fifty per cent. of the expenses. The well-managed wood-yards and lodging-houses under the care of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity earn from sixty-two to seventy-five per cent. of their expenses. The Friendly Inn and Provident Wood-yard of Baltimore is far from self-supporting, partly because work enough is not provided to

keep all the applicants busy, and some relief is consequently given gratis. Wood-yards reported to be self-supporting are connected with the Roxbury Charitable Society of Boston (but the accounts of the yard are here inextricably involved with those of relief proper), the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, and the Organized Charities Association of New Haven. While the Charity Organization Society of Chicago was in existence, its wood-yard was a source of revenue.

"If it can be shown that, under existing industrial conditions, the shiftless and unskilled class, which makes up the bulk of the floating pauperism of our great cities, can be made self-supporting, we shall have gone far towards the solution of the hard problem of vagrancy."* But this as yet has certainly not been shown. The managers of the wood-yards uniformly complain that they cannot dispose of enough of the product to employ all the men profitably. The competition of steam-driven machinery is severe. In other words, charity has not yet found a way to utilize surely the waste labor power of the floating population. The differences in results reached at various places seem to depend slightly upon differences of condition, but mainly upon different degrees of business ability in the managers. Where the wood-yards have been self-sustaining, it has been because some one has donated a considerable amount of executive ability, and this gift has made up for the disadvantage of hand-saws and inefficient workmen. Nothing is found to defeat such an enterprise more certainly than to hire a semi-pauper to superintend it.

But these enterprises, while not specially successful as industrial undertakings, are eminently so as relieving agencies. First, the work-test keeps away a great number of applicants; and the distant prospect of it prevents a

* *Seventh Annual Report of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity*, 1885, p. 15.

considerable number, hovering on the brink of pauperism, from qualifying for the receipt of alms. In the second place, the opportunity to work does in a measure preserve the independence and self-respect of those who receive aid. While it may be true that "it is impossible to dissociate the taint of charity from relief [in the form of] work";* yet the "taint," of what might better be called almsgiving than charity, is not so dark as in relief without work. In the third place, if the management is at all good, the product of the work somewhat lessens the cost of relieving the destitute.

(II.) It is in Germany that we find the most systematic experiments in charity work of which the object is to educate the worker into competency for regular self-sustaining existence. While some very useful undertakings of this sort have been carried on in England and the United States, they can be better understood after a careful examination of the German Laborers' Colonies and the institutions allied with them.

During the early years of the last decade, the number of beggars and vagabonds in Germany seemed to be steadily increasing. The total number of such persons roaming about the land was variously estimated at from 40,000 to 200,000; and the very diversity of the estimates, in a land of careful statisticians and efficient police, shows how completely the authorities had failed to meet the evil or even accurately to measure it. Indiscriminate giving on the part of individuals was very general, the excuse for it being that there was no other way to keep men from starving. Von Bodelschwingh, a Protestant minister interested in the management of an institution for the care of epileptics, began to make experiments at this institution

* A. Dunn Gardner, in the *London Charity Organization Review*, vol. iv. p. 260. The writers for this *Review* are, for the most part, "orthodox" economists, who accept the wages-fund theory, and at the same time are active workers in practical charities.

in the direction of giving relief only in return for work done. As long as this rule could be followed, it was found that the number of applicants decreased, while their character improved.

On certain waste but redeemable land, situated not far from the highway between Berlin and Cologne, and about ten miles from the manufacturing town of Bielefeld, Pastor von Bodelschwingh secured the establishment of the first Laborers' Colony, Wilhelmsdorf, which was opened in March, 1882. The primary object of the colony was announced to be "to employ at agricultural or other labor, until such time as regular positions could be found for them, all men, of whatever religion or rank, who were able and willing to work." The second object was to deprive all vagabonds who would not work (*arbeitsscheue Vagabunden*) of their stock excuse for begging,—the claim, that is, that they could find no work.

Twenty-one colonies organized in a similar way and for similar purposes are now in existence, with possible accommodations for nearly twenty-five hundred laborers. The first table in the appendix gives a list of the colonies; the date of opening of each; the number of men received and dismissed since the opening and during the year 1889; the number each colony can possibly accommodate; a classification of those admitted during 1889 according to age, religion, and marital state; and a classification of those who left during the year according to the reasons for departure. Besides these, two industrial homes for the temporary support of women are spoken of as *weibliche Arbeiterkolonien*. The prospective establishment of similar institutions in Russia and Belgium is also announced. The expenses of maintaining the colonies are usually met by voluntary contributions from private persons; but public subventions, oftenest in the form of a non-interest bearing loan, are not infrequent. The influence of the Church both in raising the funds and in the

management of the colonies is very marked. They are all of Protestant origin, except Elkenroth and Maria-Veen, which are conducted by the Catholics. Only one, in Berlin, is in a town. It is a cardinal point in the rules of the institutions that no one is admitted as a matter of right. They are established from "free compassion"; and it is held that neither the Church nor the State should be organically connected with their management. Men are admitted without regard to their moral deserts or past record; and the only consideration paid to the matter of an applicant's previous residence is that, in case all cannot be accommodated, men from the neighborhood have the preference. The table indicates the reasons for which men are dismissed.

The commonest occupations in the colonies are ordinary farm labor, the reclamation of sand wastes, moorland, or rocky fields, forest culture, and such trades as are necessary to supply the wants of the colonists. As the pressure for admission is much stronger in the winter than in the summer, it is necessary to have land that can be worked all the year round, or other work at which the men can be employed.* Straw plaiting, broom-making, and other trades have been sometimes introduced. The colony at Berlin is simply a great workshop. The labor exacted varies in severity in the different colonies; but it seems to be severe in all of them. The service rendered is said to be efficient, especially in digging and other heavy work.

* For the months of 1889, the number of inmates and of available places was as follows:—

	<i>Available Places.</i>	<i>No. of Inmates at Close of Each Month.</i>
January, 1889,	2,330	2,396
February, "	2,343	2,272
March, "	2,355	1,758
April, "	2,770	1,292
May, "	2,385	1,264
June, "	2,410	1,223
July, "	2,455	1,172
August, "	2,473	1,273
September, "	2,473	1,323
October, "	2,475	1,802
November, "	2,502	2,354
December, "	2,477	2,515

See *Die Arbeiter-Kolonie*, Jahrgang VI.

The first fourteen days after his admission, the colonist works for his board and lodgings. After that, small daily wages is placed to his credit, from which payment for clothing and other articles furnished is deducted. The pay varies with the different colonies, the season of the year, the efficiency of the man, and the length of time he remains at the colony. The amount given for work is kept considerably below the amount paid for similar service in the neighborhood. It varies from fifteen to fifty pfennige per day. Many of the men have a little sum to their credit on leaving the colony, usually not more than one to five marks, but sometimes reaching as much as fifty. The relation of length of residence in the colony to amount of savings is shown in Table II. in the Appendix.

The gross expenditure for land and improvements by the twenty-one colonies has been 2,158,273 marks, without allowing for some defective returns. The number of available places at the end of 1889 was a little less than 2,500, making the permanent investment for each place about 863 marks. The average annual net cost for each colonist ranges in the different colonies from fifty to one hundred and twenty-seven marks.*

A system of *Naturalverpflegungsstationen* is operated in connection with the colonies, and forms an essential part of the whole system for aiding the unemployed. These stations will be better described to an English reader by calling them stations for the relief of wanderers than by a literal translation of their German name ("stations for relief in kind"). They correspond in part to the friendly inns of this country and to the wayfarers' lodging-houses of England. Their object is to give, in return for work, relief in kind, food and lodging, to homeless applicants. In connection with the larger ones are bath-rooms, arrangements for disinfecting clothing and for the destruction of vermin, and other appliances necessary to the decent care of the lodgers. The work provided is usually

* *Arbeiter-Kolonie*, Jahrgang VI. p. 9.

wood-cutting or stone-breaking. It is held to be essential that the relief given should be adequate in quality and quantity to keep a man in good physical condition for hard work and for travelling; and it is hoped to have such a network of these stations over the country that a penniless man seeking work can travel from one end of the empire to another without needing to beg.

Contrary to the practice in the case of the colonies, these stations are generally supported by public funds obtained from the local poor-law authorities. Church influence is usually to be traced both in securing the establishment of a station and in its subsequent management. In small places, the station is often operated in connection with some lodging-house, the keeper of which consents to care for the applicants and to give them work. In other places, the station is connected with a *Herberg zur Heimath*; that is, a cheap lodging-house under the management of the Home Missionary Society. There are now between nine hundred and a thousand of these *Naturalverpflegungsstationen* in operation. Reports from most of these (some failed to report) showed a total of 3,712 lodgers during the night from January 31 to February 1, 1888. As an aid in securing regular work for the unemployed, intelligence offices, or labor agencies (*Arbeitsnachweisanstalten*), have been organized at most of the colonies and at more than half the stations.*

The greatest defect in the present management of the stations is that many of them do not have work enough for their lodgers. In this case, either the accommodations are given without return or a small money charge is made. The former method is that of the free soup-house, and is attended with the usual evils. When the second

* On the general subject of labor agencies, charitable and other, see Oster-tag, *Arbeitsnachweis als Mittel zum vorbeugen der Armenpflege*, in the *Schriften des deutschen Vereins für Armenpflege und Wohlthätigkeit*, Heft 1; Reitzenstein, *Ueber Beschäftigung arbeitsloser Armer und Arbeitsnachweis*, *ibid.*, Heft 4; Münsterberg, in the *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung*, vol. xii. p. 203 seq.

plan is tried, the tramp generally obtains by begging the few pennies necessary to pay for his entertainment.

The results of these elaborate attempts to aid the unemployed have been much debated. The *Correspondenzblatt für die Interessen der deutschen Arbeiter-Kolonien* is a monthly publication of thirty-two pages, now in its seventh year. Like most organs of philanthropic undertakings, it gives a very favorable view of the experiments, yet states with great fairness the objections that are urged. On the cover of this periodical is a pair of "before and after" pictures. One is that of a ragged, disreputable-looking tramp, with a heavy cudgel under his arm. The other is that of a man with good clothes, a waxed moustache, a turn-down collar, and a neat walking-stick. Letters from ex-colonists are published from time to time, which indicate that in some cases such a transformation has been wrought, and that in very many instances a man who was degenerating into a loafer has been set aright, and restored to the ranks of contented and efficient industry. The most available statistical studies of the results reached are those of Dr. G. Berthold, of Berlin, to whose papers, prepared for the *Verein für Armenpflege und Wohlthätigkeit*, I am chiefly indebted for the tables of results here used.

From Table III. in the Appendix, it appears that, during the administrative year 1886-87, 1,470 out of 5,934 colonists dismissed from sixteen colonies, or about twenty-five per cent., left because they had found work or because work had been found for them. The subsequent history of these men is not easy to trace, but it is known that many of them do not retain their places for any considerable time. Sometimes they are dissatisfied, and sometimes their employers are. Von Reitzenstein suggests that there ought to be persons in each community who would keep up acquaintance with ex-colonists, and encourage them. This friendly individualizing of cases has been

found one of the most efficient means of saving the men from degeneration. Of the 3,427 dismissed at their own request, it is thought that a very large proportion resume the life of the tramp (*Landstreicher*), though this is not necessarily the case.

Berthold has devised for the use of the colonies a system of card records, each man being given a separate card, on which are tabulated all obtainable facts that can be of use to the statistician. This card catalogue of cases is almost exactly like that kept by an English or American Charity Organization Society. On bringing together the case cards from all the colonies, and arranging them alphabetically according to the names of the colonists, it is possible to trace an individual from one colony to another. Using this system to test the use made by the men of their earnings, many cases of prompt extravagance were found: R. leaves Wilhelmsdorf with 63 marks, and three days afterwards is admitted to Elkenroth, having nothing; H. leaves Wuncha with 92 marks, and reapplies for admission in five days, having nothing.*

This tendency of the ex-colonists to reapply for admission is one of the discouraging features of the work. It is the purpose of the colonies to graduate their inmates into independence, and the persistent returns indicate that they are failing of this result. There has certainly developed a class of "colony bummers" (*Koloniebummlern*), who go from one colony to another, with brief periods of wandering freedom between dismissal from one and admission to another.† Von Reitzenstein sug-

* Berthold, *Weiterentwicklung der deutschen Arbeiterkolonien*, p. 19, and following, where many cases are given.

† From Berthold, pp. 6, 7, I copy the records of two of this class, so far as they have been traced. Marsch., born March 6, 1830; at Kästorf from May 7 to September 1, 1883, 116 days; at Seyda from January 1 to June 15, 1884, 142 days; at Kästorf from July 2 to September 13, 1884, 73 days; at Seyda from November 15, 1884, to March 2, 1885, 107 days; at Dauelsberg from March 6 to June 22, 1885, 108 days; at Kästorf from June 29 to September 18,

gests the organization of home colonies (*Heimath-Kolonien*), to which those who are not able to get on in the outside world may be sent. As branches of the work at Wilhelmsdorf, there have already been established an asylum for inebriates and a home colony for cripples. In connection with Düring, experiments are begun towards allowing men unfit for competitive life to take up plots of ground, on which it is hoped they may be able to support themselves. It has been suggested as a possible way of checking the tendency to recidivism that the time of unremunerated employment be lengthened each time a man is readmitted. Certainly, if the colonies are to continue to be places for the treatment of acute cases of lack of work, some way must be found of preventing them from filling up with chronic cases.

From Table IV. in the Appendix, it will be seen that more than three-fourths of the colonists are ex-prisoners,—a fact of very considerable importance, indicating the character of the men who apply for work charitably provided. It is evident that a large portion of the work of the colonies corresponds to that done in this country by the

1885, 111 days; at Seyda from November 3, 1885, to April 5, 1886, 153 days; at Meierei from May 5 to September 6, 1886, 124 days; at Seyda from November 25, 1886, to May 9, 1887, 165 days. Four times he was dismissed from a colony at his own request, and three times because of the expiration of the period during which a man might remain at the given colony. The reasons for leaving at the other times are not given. Only twice did he leave with any earnings, the amount being in one case nine and in the other eighteen marks. The other case is that of Ri., born June 16, 1844; at Berlin December 22, 1884, to January 11, 1885, 20 days; at Berlin from January 25 to April 10, 1885, 75 days; at Berlin from May 7 to May 20, 1885, 13 days; at Berlin from June 8 to July 17, 1885, 39 days; at Friederichswille from August 28 to September 29, 1885, 32 days; at Berlin from May 5 to May 21, 1886, 16 days; at Wuncha from August 14 to September 30, 1886, 47 days; at Berlin from March 11 to March 14, 1887, 3 days. He was dismissed three times on his own request, three times because work had been found for him outside the colony, once on account of drunkenness, and once for insubordination. The first of these two men was probably a representative of the helpless, inefficient class, who would gladly find a home where all responsibility might be put off; while the second seems to have been the representative of a younger, more vigorous, and more dissolute class.

Prisoners' Aid Associations. Probably some of the more respectable of the out-of-work classes are deterred from seeking admission to the colonies because of the low average character of the inmates. An English visitor to the colonies tells us that "occasionally a thoroughly reliable workman asks admission from sheer inability to find work."

Turning to consider the results of the *Naturalverpflegungsstationen*, we find it generally conceded that they have materially reduced the amount of vagrancy, and have been a most efficient weapon in the hand of the societies against mendicancy. It is urged against them, on the other hand, that, while attempting to increase "artificially" the mobility of labor, they have promoted useless wandering, and have made it easy for apprentices and others to leave steady employment and go off for a tramp. Habits of vagabondage are thus encouraged, and the evil increased that it was intended to cure. Definite figures sustaining or disproving this criticism are hardly obtainable; but the evil, if it exists, seems not incapable of mitigation. It is hoped to secure a more uniform administration of the stations than at present exists, and then to require all who travel by the help of them to carry cards (*Wanderkarten*), which shall be stamped and dated at each station. The applicant for lodging will then be required to give a consistent account of himself; and, if the dates on his card show that he has really been making definite progress towards some particular point, he will be lodged and given work. But, if his card indicates that he is wandering about aimlessly, or if he has no card, and cannot satisfactorily explain his presence in the neighborhood, he will be turned over to the authorities to be treated as a vagrant. Such cards or other credentials are now required at many of the stations.

A great deal of stress has been put upon the decreasing

number of persons annually sent to correctional institutions, as proving the value of the colonies and stations. In 1882, when the first colony was established, there were 28,027 persons sentenced to correctional institutions in Prussia. In the administrative year 1887-88, the number had fallen to 19,180.* All of this decrease should not, of course, be attributed to the influence of the colonies and stations. Berthold thinks that changed industrial conditions have had much to do with it. He also points out that the decrease in the number of convictions has been marked in some provinces where there is no colony. Too much cannot be made of this latter point, since the influence of a colony might be expected to extend beyond the boundaries of a single province; and, moreover, the provinces which are instanced as having no colonies do have stations.

At present, the management of the German Laborers' Colonies is intelligent and vigorous. If it continues to be so, there seems to be no reason why they may not continue to aid the unemployed, repress mendicancy, and eventually lessen the demands upon themselves by the healthful diminution of the numbers of the class they serve. But there is no magic in their machinery. It will not run itself. It is entirely possible for a colony to add to the almshouse and the jail another overcrowded winter resort for tramps, and so to increase the evils it tries to lessen.

As to educative charity work in England, it may be said that "the Poor Law has come to the conclusion that, while it can educate and train children, it can only relieve and give tasks to adults, and for their reformation can do little or nothing."† A few desultory experiments by private parties have been directed chiefly to the testing

* Berthold, in the article *Arbeiter-Kolonie* in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*.

† *Charity Organization Review*, vol. iv. p. 82.

of the capacity of men it was proposed to send to the British colonies, and to giving such prospective emigrants some knowledge of agricultural labor. In the United States, no extensive experiments of this sort have been undertaken, though certain isolated enterprises have been well managed, and have achieved encouraging success. Among such cannot be included the average "mothers' mission," in which the ladies of a wealthy church pay a high price for poor sewing, and are as likely to teach lessons of dependence as anything more helpful. But among truly successful enterprises may be mentioned the Co-operative Sewing Society of Boston and the Central Work-rooms and Laundry of the Bureau of Charities of Brooklyn. At the Brooklyn Work-rooms, unskilled women, without recommendations, are given employment in coarse sewing, knitting, braiding rugs, making mats, and the preparation of material for rag carpets. No matter how forlorn and disreputable a woman may be, if she wants work, and is able to pick black rags from white ones, she can have employment at these rooms and support in return for what she does. If, after a long trial, she cannot or does not improve, she may be persuaded that the almshouse is the best place for her; but, while she shows any possibility of becoming self-supporting, she is kept at work. From the work-rooms women may be promoted to the laundry and training-school, and finally go back to ordinary life, having received certain things that cannot be bartered away,—some little skill, habits of industry, and knowledge of their own improvability.

Mr. Buzelle, General Secretary of the Bureau of Charities, thinks that "the value of the industrial education as an opportunity for friendly influence far exceeds the commercial value of the added ability to do certain things." Funds, and the machinery begotten of them, cannot solve the problem. "There must be an adequate number of qualified people, one of whom will become personally

acquainted with one of the unemployed, so that each employee shall have an intelligent personal friend, whose effort will be to see the employee physically, mentally, and morally equipped to some hopeful degree for the struggle of life, and whose friendship will follow the employee through the training and out into the subsequent struggle and to the end of it."

(III.) Mr. Charles Booth, in his elaborate studies of the population of East London, comes to the conclusion that the "poverty of the poor is mainly the result of the competition of the very poor," and that the entire removal of the latter class from the daily struggle for existence is the only solution of the problem of poverty. A contributor to the *Charity Organization Review* has suggested the creation of a class of State slaves, living in celibate working colonies, and only permitted to get back to the world at large as a reward of hard work, and then only under very careful restrictions. The purpose of Mr. Herbert V. Mills's book on *Poverty and the State* is to plead for the isolation of those not adapted to competitive industry, and their removal to colonies wholly isolated from the rest of industrial society. He would have these colonies produce only for themselves, and thinks that they could undoubtedly be self-supporting.

Such propositions at first sight seem startling. It is not generally known that experiments on similar lines have been in progress in Holland since 1818. In that year, General van den Bosch secured the organization of a permanent *Kommissie van Weldadigheid*, of which Prince Frederick was president and himself the second assessor. From a knowledge of certain Chinese colonies in Java, he had become convinced of the practicability of employing poor or pauper laborers in fertilizing and cultivating barren soils; and he believed that in this way able-bodied indigent persons of good character might be made self-

sustaining, provided funds could be obtained to purchase the waste land and to maintain the families until it became productive. The movement was popular, and the support generous. Several free colonies were undertaken, the first, largest, and most enduring being that of Frederiksoord, on the heath land between the provinces of Drenthe, Friesland, and Over-ijssel. The establishment of the beggar colonies, which are semi-penal settlements, began in 1820, the two largest being Ommerschans and Veenhuizen. The interesting history of these colonies from the beginning cannot be here given. They went more and more deeply in debt until 1859, when the free and beggar colonies were put under separate management, and the public authorities came to the financial relief of the *Maatschappij van Weldadigheid* (Society for Benevolence). The net gift of the State to the association amounted to about 5,535,000 guilders.

At present, the management and support of the free colonies rest entirely with this association, which has branches in all parts of Holland. On the payment of 1,700 guilders, any branch association is entitled to have a poor family at the free colonies in perpetuity. All needed income above the earnings of the colonies is obtained in the form of gifts, legacies, and contributions from the branch associations. The colony of Frederiksoord has a tract of about 5,000 acres, divided into six model farms of about 200 acres each, and 224 small holdings, each occupied by a single family. The model farms give work and support to about ninety persons each. The average number of individuals at the colony during the past fifteen years has been 1,790, including orphans boarded with different families.

New families are selected by the branch associations that have paid for the right to send them, and are given an outfit and transportation without expense to the colony. After admittance, any family can go away that

wishes to do so; but none are ever compelled to leave except for violations of the rules. About nineteen-twentieths of the families sent are town-bred people. They are first placed among the laborers on one of the model farms, and, after serving an apprenticeship of varying length, are given the care of a small farm, with an outfit, on easy terms. These "free farmers" pay a rent but little, if any, below that demanded by private landlords for similar land. The work obtained from the colonists is said to be distinctly good, the farms are well kept up, and the whole colony has an appearance of thrift and prosperity. Thoroughly good schools are maintained, as well as four churches,—two Protestant, one Catholic, and one Jewish.

Some shops are operated to give work in winter, and are a source of revenue, although outside competition has been found severe. The principal exports, as given by Willink,* are baskets, mats, and sacking, fat cattle, pigs, butter (a special product, which is all sold to the Jews of Amsterdam), cheese, buckwheat, wood, and tan bark. The leading imports are manure, hay, willows, cocoa fibre, lumber, cloth (from the beggar colonies), brick, some cattle, and coal. An early attempt to have all the transactions within the colony carried on by means of token money has been abandoned. The balance sheet at the end of 1886 shows assets to the amount of 1,324,672 guilders. The average annual amount of charitable subvention during fifteen years, as given by Willink, has been 16,405 guilders. The free farmer class are said to be entirely self-sustaining; but Willink points out that they are aided in certain indirect ways: rather low rent, and no interest charged on arrears; outfit given; cow, manure, and so forth, on easy terms; work to be had in the workshops of the Association, when there is nothing to be done

* Mr. Willink's four articles in Volume IV. of the *Charity Organization Review* are my chief authority for this part of my paper. The articles have been reprinted in pamphlet form. Mills's *Poverty and the State* also describes the Dutch Home Labor Colonies.

on the farm; cheap doctoring and education. Notwithstanding these advantages, they do not save, although they are apparently prosperous and contented.

As it is in the nature of the colony that it should be a home, but few new families can be received. As a matter of fact, less than half a dozen are admitted annually. The number of colonists has decreased from 2,007 in 1873 to 1,789 at the close of 1886. Between the energetic poor, who refuse to go to the colony, and the abject beggars, who will not be received, the number of available recruits is small, and apparently decreasing.

The beggar colonies are semi-penal settlements, managed and supported since 1859 by the government. A person convicted of begging is sentenced for a short term to jail, and in addition is sent to the colony for about three years. Some are also admitted on request, and some confirmed drunkards are also sent to the colonies. The population of the beggar colonies is about 3,000, many of the inmates being too old to work, and many too feeble and sick. The annual net cost of maintenance is 350,000 guilders, out of which hospitals are maintained, officers and soldiers are paid, books are purchased for the free library, and Protestant and Catholic clergymen and their churches are supported. Farm workshops are operated; but work is much hampered by the fear of "competing with honest labor." * It is hard to find enough work to keep all busy, and therefore clumsy machines and processes are used to make work. Besides support, the workers receive small wages, graded according to efficiency. Two-thirds of this they may spend, receiving the rest on dismissal. It is estimated that it requires fifteen of the colonists to do as much work as one efficient laborer. While the inmates are sentenced for definite terms, many of them like the freedom from care in the life of the colony, and

* The manufacture of shoes is forbidden to the colony by law; but, as cobbling may be done, a new shoe is obtained by twice repairing an old one.

are so expert at getting recommitted that they are practically inmates for life.*

Holland is much more free from mendicants than it was before the colonies were established; but, whether or not this is because the paupers have been isolated in the colonies, observers are not agreed. That this method of dealing with pauperism has helped to bring about the result named, there seems to be but little doubt. Those who are predisposed in favor of the colonies are prone to say that, if certain mistakes had not been made, they would have been financially as well as otherwise successful. It need only be answered that mistakes are such a constant factor in all industrial enterprises that it is necessary to allow for them in making calculations.

The review of these experiments brings into prominence the generally low standard of efficiency among those who apply for work charitably provided. Many who would be classed among the deserving poor and the able-bodied, are not, so to speak, able-minded. They lack inventiveness, energy, power of initiative. The men who go out from the German Laborers' colonies often fail to give satisfaction, because they need such constant and minute direction in all they do. A recent writer on criminal anthropology,† in commenting on the failure of certain Parisian beggars to do work offered them, says that "it is not sufficiently known that these poor creatures are already, by the facts of their physical organization, cut off from the great body of humanity." This raises the question whether the competitive organization of industry does not, after all, provide a place for every really efficient laborer. I asked Mr. Buzelle, of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, if he

* Mr. Mills tells of a gardener who had been sentenced fifteen times. He could not succeed as a gardener outside, but suited the manager of Veenhuizen.

† H. Ellis, *The Criminal*, pp. 222, 223.

found it difficult, as a rule, to secure regular situations for faithful and efficient workers. His answer was, "For faithful, yes; for efficient, yes; for faithful *and* efficient, no." Must we then conclude that the wasted labor force said to be embodied in the "unemployed" is, like the slaty refuse of a mine, not worth utilizing? There are those who would answer this question in the affirmative, and would say that there is no problem of unemployed; that, if a man is out of work, he is presumptively useless, one of the unfit, and his failure to survive should not be a matter of regret. But such a conclusion is surely unwarranted, because voluntary idleness, mental incapacity, physical degeneration, and the habits and vices from which these ills are immediately derived, are themselves often begotten of enforced idleness and other unfortunate conditions. If we insist on considering the laborer as a "product," we must admit that he is not, like a native mineral, the product of forces wholly beyond our control, but is rather the product of a species of homo-culture, the processes of which may conceivably be varied. Factory legislation and free education are examples of conscious variation of this sort, and their industrial justification is found in the higher standard of efficiency produced. The problem of the unemployed is not dismissed by simply proving that the unemployed are not efficient. It is rather rendered more important and more intricate.

Superficially considered, the three classes of experiments on behalf of the unemployed seem to have been failures. The attempt to give temporary work resulted in the conviction that many of the unemployed must have industrial training before they could be dismissed as permanently self-supporting. The attempt to give industrial training resulted in the conviction that many of the unemployed could never be qualified for ordinary industrial life at all. And, finally, the attempt to provide artificial conditions of existence for selected cases has failed to show

that those unfit for competitive life can be so organized as to support themselves and their superintendents and teachers. "To farm waste land with bad labor" has not been found profitable in a money sense. Yet all this amounts only to saying that no mechanical solution of the problem of pauperism has been found. No cure-all has been discovered, to be sure; but at each stage of the experimenting some cases have been reached, some cures effected. And it must be noticed that, if the direct benefits to the unemployed have been fewer than was hoped, the benefits accruing to the general public have been clear and steady. The negative side of the work has been more successful than the positive, the deterrent has been more pronounced than the reformatory influence. The experiments reviewed in this paper have lessened mendicancy by lessening the amount of indiscriminate giving, and of consequent degradation. They have afforded the thoughtless almsgiver a satisfying reason for withholding his mischievous doles; and, rightly considered, it is as beneficent a work to prevent falling as it is to raise the fallen. Certainly, the results obtained justify continued experiments on similar lines.

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